



# Secretary of State

# State Records Center



**For State Agency Records Officers,  
Records Coordinators,  
and Records Custodians**

# ***Washington State* **Records Center****

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## **User's Manual**

**for State Agency Records Officers,  
Records Coordinators,  
and Records Custodians**

*Web posted edition December 2002*

# Records Center User's Manual

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# INTRODUCTION

The Archives and Records Management Division operates a state records center for the economical storage of and access to inactive records of the State Government. The State Records Center, established by RCW 40.14.020(5), is modeled on similar operations in federal government and private industry. Records Center services are available to all State agencies at minimal cost.

The Records Center is designed and equipped to store agency public records in an efficient and economical manner that saves both space and dollars. Efficient storage equipment allows five times as many records to be stored per square foot of Records Center space as in equivalent office space. The average cost to lease office space in Washington State is about \$25.00 per square foot per year. On that basis, it costs \$600.00 per year to house each letter-size, four –drawer filing cabinet and \$900.00 per year to house each legal-size, four-drawer filing cabinet. Keep in mind that as the cost of inflation and the cost of energy increase, these figures will increase (costs analysis established by the Washington State Department of General Administration 2001). On the other hand, the per annum cost to taxpayers for Records Center storage is a mere \$1.60 per cubic foot for both space and equipment, a substantial savings to the agency and the taxpayer.

With those facts in mind, the Records Center storage offers a number of benefits to agency records programs. By judicious use of the Records Center for off-site storage, agencies can free up valuable office space without having to lose access to their records. Using off-site storage also reduces indoor air pollution and avoids the cost of additional filing equipment. These advantages take on increased importance as competing priorities struggle for existing office space and as offices move to newer, and often smaller, space.

This guide explains the role of the Division to assist agencies in creating an effective records management program. It provides a detailed description of the Records Center processes and procedures to follow when:

- Retiring inactive records to the Records Center
- Retrieving records from the Records Center
- Approving the final disposition of records that have met their retention at the Records Center

You will be able to answer issues regarding:

- How do I prepare the records?
- Where do I get boxes?
- How do I prepare a box list?
- How do I complete the forms?
- Whom do I contact at the Records Center?
- How do I transfer the records?
- How do I pack my records?
- How do I retrieve records from the Records Center?

## **Records Center's commitment to our customers**

The State Records Center will provide to our customer agencies: trained courteous staff, cost effective records storage in an efficient warehouse facility, ease of reference with controlled access, and protection of public records.

# DIVISION DIRECTORY

<b>Records Center</b> General Information FAX E-Mail	(360)753-5468 <u>or</u> (360)586-0173 (360) 586-9137 recordscenter@secstate.wa.gov
Archives Administration	(360) 586-2666
Archives Research	(360) 586-1492
Imaging & Preservation Services	(360) 586-2487
Records Management	(360) 586-4900 or 586-4902

RECORDS CENTER LOCATION & HOURS	
Physical location <i>(adjacent to the State Printer)</i>	7590 New Market Street SW Tumwater, Washington 98501
Mailing address	OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE Division of Archives & Records Management State Records Center PO BOX 40239 OLYMPIA, WA 98504-0239
Consolidated mail stop	40239
Hours of Operation	Monday – Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (closed on all State Holidays)
<b><u>Driving Instructions:</u></b> Take Interstate 5 exit #101, head east on Airdustrial Way. Turn right on 3 <sup>rd</sup> street; take an immediate left at the second entrance into the parking lot of the Isabella Bush Records Center.	

## TOURS & TRAINING

Tours of the Records Center are available upon request. Any customer, or potential customer, is encouraged to come and see how their records are stored and accessed.

Formal classroom training on Records Center procedures is provided through the Department of Personnel/Education & Training Program. The Department of Personnel charges a minimal fee for this class. Contact your agency training officer to register for the Department of Personnel class. Informal training, tailored to specific situations and needs, is available on request. There is no charge for this less formal training. Contact the Records Center Manager to arrange for a tour or for information about training.

# STORAGE OPTIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE MEDIUM TYPES

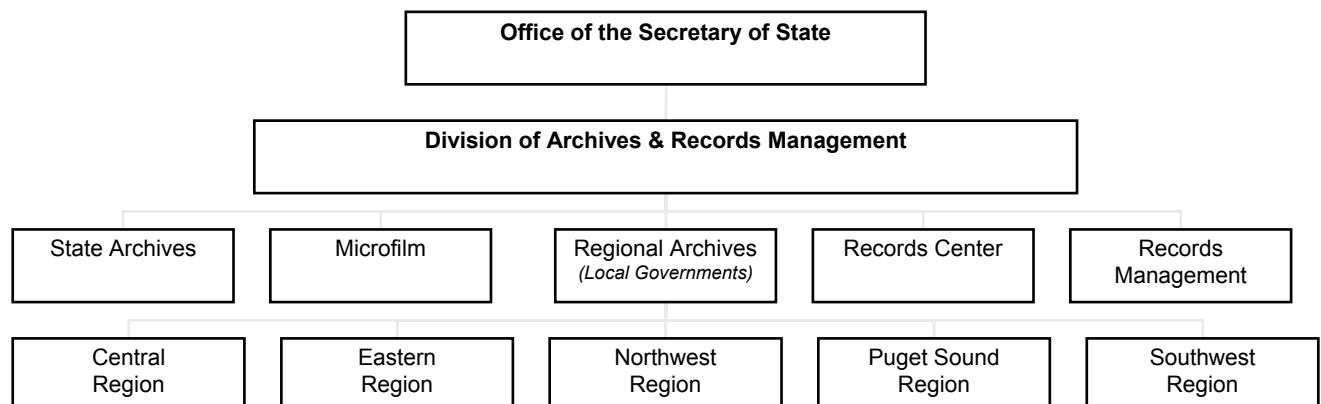
The information in this publication pertains only to paper-based records. If you would like to retire microfiche, maps, electronic, audiovisual, or other non-paper materials, contact your Agency Records Officer or the Records Center staff for detailed assistance for the following:

- Essential records or "security" microfilm copies
- Magnetic media storage, including computer back-up tapes

You can store audio or video tapes at the Records Center. However, we do not provide the climate controlled storage environment specified for magnetic media or take special steps to protect tapes from magnetic fields. Consequently, we cannot guarantee that tapes will be protected from deterioration or damage.

## THE DIVISION OF ARCHIVES AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT'S ROLE

The Division of Archives & Records Management's role is to assist and oversee the records management efforts of each agency. The Division strives to work in close partnership with the agency Records Officers as the primary contact within the agency.



# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ARCHIVES & THE RECORDS CENTER

Confusion between the functions and duties of the Records Center section and the Archives section of the Division of Archives and Records Management can cause problems for agency staff and Records Officers. “Archiving” records is a commonly used expression. In most cases, these records are actually being sent to the Records Center for inactive records storage. While the Archives section and the Records Center work closely together and have similar goals, each perform very different functions. The differences can have a significant impact on access to your records. Understanding these differences is imperative to successfully managing your records program.

## State Records Center

- Serves as an off-site storage facility for inactive state agency records
- Only stores records that are included on approved records retention schedules and that have not yet reached the end of their retention period
- Upon request, checks records out only to the agency of origin
- Charges the agency of origin for storage based upon the number of boxes stored
- Assigns each box a unique bar-code number for inventory control, tracking and reference
- Has physical custody only of agency records. Originating agency retains legal custody and retains the public disclosure responsibility

## State Archives

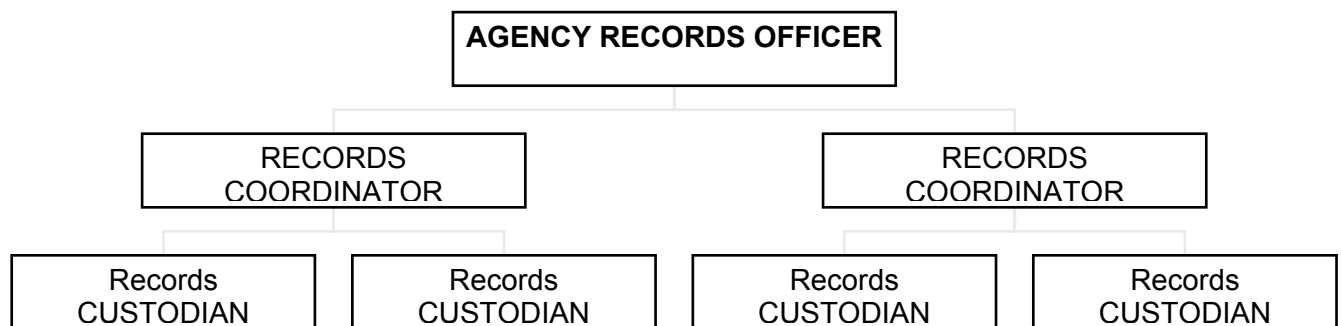
- Only stores records which have historical value (approximately 5% of an agency's records)
- Only accepts records that have: 1) met their total retention period; 2) been designated as “Archival” by the Archival Appraisal Committee (*indicated on the record retention schedule in the remarks column*)
- Takes possession of a defunct agency's records if they are not assigned by law to another agency
- Allows access to anyone, under the terms of the Public Disclosure Act
- Does not check records out except under very special circumstances
- Takes legal custody of the records and the agency is charged based on the number of its Full Time Employees (FTEs)
- Catalogs its holdings by subject, content and origin

*For further information, ask your agency's Records Officer for a copy of the Archival Records, Collection Policy, and Transfer Manual or contact the State Archives (see Division directory page 2).*



# THE ROLE OF THE AGENCY RECORDS OFFICER

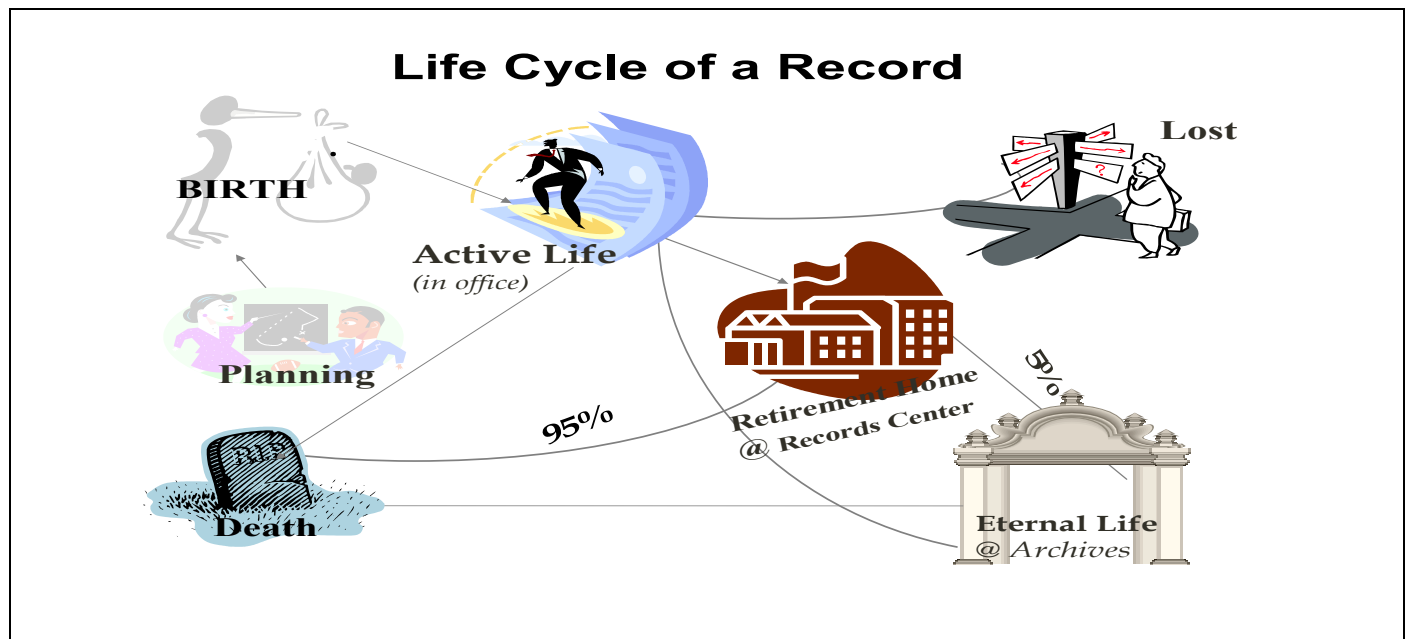
The Agency Records Officer role is defined by statute in RCW 40.14.040. Records Officers are responsible for the Agencies records management program, including oversight of the records retirement (storage) program. They serve as the Agency's primary liaison with the Records Center, coordinates the transfer and retrieval of records, and assists offices in completing the necessary forms and handling special situations. In addition, the Records Officer provides a wide range of services including management briefings on records management policies and responsibilities, staff training, assistance with file plans and similar problems, and organizes the records management network to stimulate interaction among agency Records Coordinators. The following diagram illustrates an agency records program hierarchy.



## DETERMINE WHICH RECORDS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR RECORDS CENTER STORAGE

### How to determine a records active/inactive status

The Records Retention Schedule documents the *life cycle* of a record series. It is your primary and most important tool to manage the information in your office or agency. Legal authority on how to maintain and destroy a public record is found in RCW 40.14. The records retention schedule defined in RCW 40.14, determines when a record can be legally destroyed and specifies active and inactive status. *Records may be transferred to the Records Center when they become Inactive.*



## Records Retention Schedules

There are two types of schedules - **General Schedules** and agency unique Records Retention Schedules (*see samples on following pages*). The General Schedules include types of records that are common to state agencies, such as accounting reports, personnel records, and payroll records. An agency can use the General Schedule as approved. Disposition Authority Numbers (DAN) on the General Schedules starts with the prefix "GS." Copies of the General Schedule are available from your Records Officer or on the Secretary of State's website <http://www.secstate.wa.gov/archives/gs.asp>

**Unique records retention schedules** are exclusive to the agency and include records that are specific to the agency program and documents its mission and services. These schedules cannot be used by other agencies. Samples on both types of schedules are on the following page.

## Reading a Records Retention Schedule

### GENERAL RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE

Third Edition Approved by the State Records Committee: June, 2001

DAN	Title/Function	Retention Period Official Copy	Special and/or Disposition Instructions
GS 05001	PUBLIC DISCLOSURE ACT, REQUESTS AND APPEALS Formal requests for access to state agency records filed by the public, the media, or other agencies, under the terms of the Public Disclosure Act (RCW 42.17). Includes initial requests, agency responses, and documentation related to appeals in cases in which access is denied. (Revision #1, Approved June, 2001)	Disclosed, Final Response, or Appeal Denied Plus 1 Year	← Cut-off & total retention
GS 05002	GENERAL REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION Letters, memos, telephone logs, copies of responses, and related records documenting requests for information from the public, the media, and other agencies. Does not include formal requests filed under the terms of the Public Disclosure Act. (Series Approved, 1997)	Response to Request Plus 1 Year	
GS 05003	PRESS RELEASES Press or news releases issued by an agency to the media to inform the public about events, activities and accomplishments. (Series Approved, 1997)	Date of Issue Plus 2 Years	Archival
GS 05004	NEWSLETTERS AND BULLETINS, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL Internal and external newsletters and bulletins designed to provide information about agency activities. (Series Approved, 1997)	2 Years	Archival
GS 05005	PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE, SUBJECT FILES Records documenting the activities of an agency, generally organized by subject. Provides a record of events, issues and subjects related to an agency's programs, missions and activities. Used to provide background information in responding to public information requests. (Series Approved, 1997)	2 Years	Archival
GS 05006	PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE, ADMINISTRATIVE FILES Correspondence, memos, complaints, reports, files on events, and other records concerning the general administration and operation of the office. (Series Approved, 1997)	2 Years	← NO Cut-off = Date of Document

## Sample of Agency Unique

AUG 1999  
State of W. - Jan  
Office of Secretary of State

Washington State Records Committee  
RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE

Agency Title Washington State Lottery	Office of Record Marketing/Sales	Records Coordinator C. J. [Signature]	Agency 116	Office Prefix 400	In-House 400-65	Phone [Blank]	Submit Date 7/22/99
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Records Series Title & Statement of Function/Purpose	OPR CY	Location of Other Copies	CY	Office Retention mon	State Use Retention mon	Total Retention yrs	Dep. Authority	Remarks
65 SCRATCH GAME FILES.* Includes sample Washington State Lottery Instant Game Scratch tickets, insurance certificates and fidelity bond, ticket testing, trademark research, invoice payments, correspondence, working, executed, post-executed working papers.	OPR		CY	12 mon	60 mon	6 yrs	99-10-59302	

Action by the State Records Committee

Records Officer Signature [Signature]	For the Attorney General Mary Jo Diaz	For the State Auditor [Signature]	For the State Archivist [Signature]	For the Director of OFPM [Signature]
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Schedule is not valid without State Records Committee approval!

**NOTE:** If the schedule for your office does not accurately reflect what your agency does for business, contact your agency's Records Officer asking for revisions or additions to be implemented. Also, see the publication *Inventoring and Scheduling Guidelines for agency records officers* published by the Division's Records Management section.

## Use the Records Retention Schedule

If you are assigned the task of “Archiving” records, you will need to know how to read and apply both unique and general records retention schedules. Accurately determine if each record should be:

- kept in the office for continuing on-site reference
- destroyed in-office if the retention is complete
- added to the existing schedules because it is not listed
- sent to the State Records Center
- sent to the State Archives (*see Archives, Records Center differences page 3*)

Follow these steps:

1. Make sure that you have the most current, approved schedule before you start. Your agency Records Officer will have a copy of the most recent schedule for your office and the General Schedule series used by your office.
2. Look in the columns labeled “Records Series Title” and “Function/Purpose” to find the name and description of the records you are working with. Carefully match the records to the “Function/Purpose” statement (*see schedule samples page 6*).
3. Cut-offs (*when the retention starts.*) Once you have located the records on your schedule, or added them to your schedule, check the range of dates for the records. Compare this to the “Cut-Off” column. Have the records reached their cut-off? If they have not, they must stay in the office.

**Simplest way to understand the cut-off:** A date or event starts the retention period for the records series. The schedule tells you how long to keep the records (six-years for example); the cut-off tells you when to start counting the six-year period.

**Correct determination of the cut-off date is critical. The cut-off determines the start, and consequently, the end of the retention period (Cut-off Date + Total Retention Period = Disposition Date).**

There are two types of cut-offs, dates and events. Examples of a date cut-off include fiscal year, biennium, quarter, month, day, week, or calendar year. The retention period for records with a date type cut-off starts on the last day of the period specified. For example, records from 3/97 with a fiscal year cut-off have a cut-off date of 6/30/97, the last day of the fiscal year. If the cut-off were calendar year, the cut-off date for these records would be 12/31/97.

Examples of event cut-offs include the date of termination of employment, a contract, or a lease; the date of completion of the building; or other events not tied to a set calendar date. Event cut-offs are, simply, when the specified event occurs. For example, the cut-off date for a contract terminating on 8/13/97 is 8/13/97. If you have a box of contracts with termination dates ranging from 2/21/97 to 8/22/97, the final cut-off date will be 8/22/97, the most recent date a contract in the box terminated. Typically, the cut-off date is shortened to just month and year.

## Cut-off Examples:

CUT-OFF	LAST DATE OF DOCUMENT IN BOX	CUT-OFF DATE
Calendar Year	3/97	12/97
Fiscal Year	3/97	6/97
Biennium	3/97	6/97
Month	3/97	3/97
Quarterly	2/97	3/97
Termination of Contract	3/97	3/97
Termination of Lease	3/97	3/97

*Note: If the cut-off concept is not clearly understood, please contact your agency's Records Officer or the State Records Center for further explanation.*

4. If the records listed on a unique schedule have reached their cut-off, next check the section labeled "Retention Period." The section is divided into three columns that splits the office (active) retention, Records Center (inactive) retention, and then adds together the active/inactive for the total retention. To determine if the retention is over, add the total retention to the cut-off date, the result is the disposition date - the date the records will be disposed or transferred to the State Archives.

The General Schedule indicates the cut off and the total retention together in the "Retention Period-Official Copy" column. If no cut-off is specifically stated (only a retention is noted), then the cut-off defaults to "date of the document."

If the disposition date has passed and the record is eligible for destruction, check the "Remarks" section of the schedule for an "Archival" designation or other special destruction notices. Contact your Records Officer to learn how to transfer the records to the Archives. If it is not marked "Archival," the records should be destroyed (assuming there are no ongoing lawsuits or audits or other reasons to hold the records past their retention). Check with your agency's Records Officer for the internal process to destroy records. There should be a list of the types and their inclusive dates of the all records destroyed to provide an audit trail.

5. If the disposition date has not passed, the records can be sent to the Records Center provided:
  - Records Center retention is designated on a unique schedule<sup>1</sup>
  - At least 4 to 6 months of the total retention remains on either Unique or General Schedules (General schedule series do not have an active/inactive designation – it is up to the agency to make that determination)
  - The record is inactive (referenced less than once per month)

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<sup>1</sup> If inactive retention is not established on you unique records retention schedule, contact your agency Records Officer. They will submit a revision to the series to adjust the retention to include inactive storage at the Records Center.

# TRANSFERRING INACTIVE RECORDS TO THE RECORDS CENTER

This section discusses the procedures that must be followed to retire or transfer inactive records to the Records Center. Specifically, this section provides systematic instructions:

- Preparing records for retirement
- Boxing the records for shipment
- Obtaining supplies (boxes, labels, and transmittals)
- Preparing box lists
- Labeling the boxes and filling out the transmittal
- Transporting the boxes to the Records Center

## Preparing Records for Retirement

Preparing records for retirement is the first and most important step in the entire process. The records you retire will serve you or your successors at the Agency as the official record of the actions, activities, or decisions that you document. Because the records may be needed to understand, evaluate, or defend those actions, the amount of time spent in preparing them will be repaid many times over if you need to retrieve records later. When preparing the records for shipment, take time to organize them by doing the following:

- Screen the records to remove extra copies of documents and non-record items such as reference materials. If you have multiple identical copies of a document or publication, retire the original, (or clearest copy if no original exists) and dispose of the remaining copies.
- Place records in either letter- or legal-size accordion or manila folders. If the records are not in folders, the boxes will not be accepted for retirement.
- Label each folder with a title to indicate the records it contains. If you follow two general rules in labeling folders, you will be able to retrieve the exact folder you need without unnecessary confusion. 1) Give each folder a unique identifier. In addition, if you are using the Agency file code system, you should add the appropriate file code designation (e.g., CORR 127, ADMI 459, etc.) to the folder. 2) Label each folder with a meaningful file name. For example, use "General Correspondence: A-F, 1996", not simply "Correspondence" as the folder title.
- Place files in the boxes in their proper order. "Proper order" depends on the file scheme used, and should correspond to the filing system used in your office. For subject files, the order is usually alphabetical. Records that are filed using a numbering scheme (contract numbers for example) should be retired in numerical order. If an alphanumeric system is used, retire the files according to the file plan. Letter-size folders should be placed in the boxes so that they are ordered from front to back. Legal-size folders should be placed in the box so that they are in order from left side to right side.
- The decisions on folder titles and record arrangement are yours and should be made to facilitate easy access. Bear in mind that once your records have been retired to the Records Center, your ability to identify records for recall (and the Records Center's ability to locate the records you request) will depend on how carefully you have labeled and arranged the files.

## Boxing Records for Shipment

Once the records have been prepared, the next step is boxing them for shipment. Records boxed and retired must be labeled and bar-coded. Boxes can consist of one or more records series with the same disposition date and disposition type (e.g. archival, essential, shred to destroy). If they are not the same, the disposition is calculated on the record series with the longest retention in the box. For example, if you plan to retire both correspondence files and contracts, the records should be retired as two separate bar-coded boxes because the record series and the dispositions are very different. *Boxes do not have to be full to be sent for storage. Extra space may be filled with recyclable paper products.*

*Public Disclosure rule: If you possess a record that was not destroyed when the retention was up, you will need to disclose the record.*

### **General rules for packing boxes:**

- Preserve the existing arrangement of the files. A group of records filed in the office in alphabetical or numerical order should be packed in the same manner. If the Records Center staff cannot retrieve your records because of a disorganized arrangement, the boxes will be returned to you for reorganization or the whole box pulled rather than an individual file.
- The boxes are designed to safely hold 35 pounds.
- The box lid must close completely to allow storage of the box on the Records Center shelf.
- Leave about 1 inch of free space in the box to allow easy removal and re-filing of records. Leave 4 inches of free space if you anticipate that the volume of records in any box will grow over time because of interfiling.
- Legal-sized documents face towards the right side of the box (the side away from the lid hinge).
- Letter-sized documents place toward the front of the box (the label end).
- *Do not put hanging file folders into boxes.*

*Oversized documents, bound volumes, or other irregular size records, you will need to provide your own containers. Call the Records Center Manager for instructions on packaging. Space has been set aside at the Records Center for non-standard size records.*

## Obtaining Supplies

To retire records to the Records Center you must use **Records Center Boxes, labels and transmittals**, which may be requested by using the Supply Request Form (see [#AppendixC](#)). This is the only size box the Records Center will accept for records storage. Assembly instructions are provided with the boxes. Boxes measure approximately 15" x 12" x 10" and hold 1,800 cubic inches or 1.04 cubic feet. *Use one of the following conversion factors to estimate the number of boxes needed:*

- Approximately 15 inches of letter-size material fit in one box. Records in one letter-size file cabinet drawer usually fit into two boxes.
- Twelve inches of legal-size material fit in one box. Records in one legal-size file cabinet drawer usually fit in two and one-half boxes.

The supplies will be mailed to you or you can pick them up. The cost of the supplies is included in the overall box charge. The Records Center can deliver a large volume of empty boxes to your office if needed. Boxes are intended only for Records Center storage.

Use one box label and one barcode box label for each box. The transmittal is either a three-part carbon form or an electronic form.

## Preparing the Box Content List

In order for you and the Records Center to know what folders are in each box, it is recommended you prepare a *box content list* that identifies the contents of each box. This is mandatory for records designated "Archival" (see your records retention schedule for the Archival designation). The box or bar-coded number followed by a listing of the folders in the box. Continue the same way for the remaining boxes in the shipment. The following is an example of a good box list of file folders about cities:

### Barcode box 1: 000043176

#### BOX 1 of 10 BOXES

1. Atlanta
2. Boston
3. Cleveland
4. Detroit
5. Evanston
6. Fairfax

### Barcode box 2: 000043177

#### BOX 2 of 10 BOXES

1. Galveston
2. Houston
3. Indianapolis
4. etc.

Each file folder title should be listed to facilitate retrieval of individual files from boxes and to document exactly what folders were retired. Some programs attempt to shorten the procedure by using ranges of folder titles such as "A-F" or "Atlanta to Fairfax" instead of listing each title. This "range" method should only be used for files that are arranged in strict numerical or chronological order. Folders must be uniformly labeled or numbered. The range should be annotated to indicate that all folders are present (inclusive) or which folders are missing, as in the following example:

Box 1: Contracts 1-31 (inclusive)

Box 2: Contracts 32-50 (Contract 39 not included)

You will need to make *copies* of the completed box content listing to attach to *your copy* of the records transmittal form.

## Labeling the Boxes

Each box must be identified with two labels, a barcode label, and a box label identifying the contents, agency, and office that owns the box.

**Barcode Label** - The barcode labels come in two pieces with matching barcode numbers. Put the larger (2" x 4") label on the box. Put the smaller (1/2" x 4") label on the transmittal form in the area marked "Place Barcode Label Here." Put only one barcode label in the designated spot on a box.



The Records Center uses the barcode label to identify the box, to record the location of the box, and to reference the box. The barcode ties the information on the transmittal to the box itself. Any marks or writing on the barcode label will make it electronically illegible. If either label rips or is marked, just discard it and use another making sure to match the labels on the transmittal and the box. The labels can be shared among offices since the Records Center does not record who receives a particular set of barcode numbers.

**Readable Box Label** - This label tells the Records Center what is in the box and who owns it. Fill in the name of the records series title, and the name of the agency and office. If the records are "archival," also enter the disposition authority number and inclusive dates. If you assign a box number for agency use, enter it. Use permanent, waterproof, dark ink on the label, type, or fill-in the labels electronically (contact the Records Center for an electronic version).

## Preparation of the Records Transmittal Form

The records transmittal form lists and describes the boxes you are sending to the State Records Center for storage and reference. The form allows you to send boxes to the Records Center, to know what boxes are stored there, and to identify the correct files or boxes to retrieve when needed.

Accurate completion of this form is critical. The information will be used to determine how long to keep your records, to identify them for reference, and to decide how to dispose of them when their retention period is completed. Failure to complete this form correctly can result in loss of information needed to meet financial, legal, audit, or program obligations of your agency and in loss of records of historical importance. The Records Center staff only checks that you are using an approved DAN. The agency Records Officer is responsible to assure that the contents of the box match the DAN that is used.

Transmittals can be legibly hand written or typed. A computer version of the form may be used after Records Center review. If you have questions about completing the form, fax a practice or draft form to us for review.

Do not copy information from the last transmittal without checking it for accuracy, the last transmittal might be wrong or information may have changed.

**Completing the Form** - In the upper right hand corner, choose "YES" if you are delivering the boxes. If you mark "No," the boxes will be picked up from your office (*the Records Center typically does not pick up fewer than six boxes from one location*).

*NOTE: See appendix D for directions on filling out the Records Center Transmittal form. Also, a box content list (see page Preparing Box Content List- page 13) is required for records scheduled as "archival." Transmittals for "archival" records without box content lists will be returned. Attach the box list to the transmittal, keeping a copy for your reference. (See your agency's Records Officer for a copy of the Archival Records Collection Policy & Transfer Manual or contact Archives – directory page 2). Make a security photocopy of the transmittal and send the original of the completed form to your Records Officer for review, approval, and signature.*

## Records Officer Review of the Transmittals

The completed transmittals must be reviewed and signed by the Records Officer. By signing, the Records Officer takes responsibility that the contents of the boxes are properly described; that the form is filled out correctly; and that the correct DAN, series title, and cut-off date are used. The Records Officer sends all three copies to the Records Center.

## Records Center Review of the Transmittals

The transmittals come to the Records Center for audit and data entry **before the boxes arrive**. This allows any problems to be resolved and insures that the Records Center maintains accurate control of its box inventory.

Before entering the information in the Records Center database, the staff audits the transmittal check to make sure that:

- ❑ the form was properly completed and signed by the Records Officer;
- ❑ a current, approved Disposition Authority Number (DAN) was used;
- ❑ the records have a Records Center retention period assigned;
- ❑ the records have reached their cut-off, but not their disposition date;
- ❑ the DAN is assigned to the agency that is using it; and
- ❑ the DAN matches the series title.

The white copy of the Transmittal form is kept at the Records Center to schedule box pick-ups, if necessary, and as a security back up to the computer system. If an electronic form is used, send only the original copy.

The Records Officer will be notified of any problems with the transmittals. If a box cannot be accepted into storage and the problem cannot be easily resolved, it will be crossed off the form. The problem will need to be corrected, the box relabeled with a new barcode, and listed on a new transmittal before it can be considered for storage. If a box is rejected in error, it still must go through the same process, but please call and make us aware of the mistake.

Copies of the processed transmittals are returned to the Records Officer. The agency Records Officer retains one copy and the other is for the office that prepared the form.

## Common Problems with Transmittals

- Not signed by the Records Officer
- The barcode number is not repeated below the barcode label
- The boxes listed are past their disposition date and should be destroyed in-office or sent directly to the State Archives (not Records Center)
- The boxes have not reached their cut-off *date or event*
- The Disposition Authority Numbers are incorrect
- The series title on the transmittal does not match the series title on the schedule
- The cut-off or inclusive date is incorrect or incomplete

# TRANSPORTING NEW BOXES TO THE RECORDS CENTER

Once the transmittal is received, approved, and data-entered, the new boxes are ready to be stored at the Records Center. When you receive the approved transmittal, a batch number will be assigned (see Records Center Use Only box for the number). Transporting options:

## Agency Delivery

Agency staff can deliver boxes to the Records Center. Call if you need directions to the building (see page 2).

## Consolidated Mail

Boxes can be sent through the State Consolidated Mail System (CMS) to the Records Center. Tape the boxes shut (but do not put tape over the barcode label or the box handles) and put the Records Center mail stop - 40239 - on the lid. Check with CMS about limits on the number of boxes they will transport at one time from your office.

## Records Center Pick-up of Records in the Puget Sound Area

Records Center staff pick-up boxes in the Thurston County area on a weekly basis. Box pick-up is done outside Thurston County, between Everett and Aberdeen, as needed. Eastern Washington pick-ups are done on an as-needed basis.

Checking the "NO" box in the upper right-hand corner of the transmittal and submitting it to the Records Center assures that you will be contacted with a scheduled box pick-up date and time. Include the exact location of the boxes and the name and telephone number of a contact person on your transmittal. At the time of pick up scheduling, alert us of any potential problems we will encounter picking up boxes at your location, including lack of a loading dock, difficult building access, times the boxes or building will not be accessible, need for a security badge or cardkey, and boxes that are in a location that is difficult to access. For first-time pick-ups, please supply directions to your building and the location of your loading dock and freight elevator.

The boxes must be centrally located in a place that is accessible to our truck and allows efficient removal of the boxes. Stack the boxes five high with the labels facing out. If your building does not have a loading dock, arrange a suitable parking and work area. When there is, no elevator in the building, records must be located on the ground floor. If a key is necessary to operate an elevator or a building visitor pass is needed, please make sure that it is available.

When the Records Center staff comes to pick up boxes, they will check several things:

- Are the boxes properly assembled and labeled?
- Are any boxes missing?
- Are there extra boxes, not listed on the transmittal?
- Are the files in a logical order in the box?

- Are there hanging file folders in the boxes?
- Are the boxes overstuffed or overweight?
- Are they located in an area accessible to our truck?

Records Center staff has authority to refuse to pick up records that are not properly prepared or are difficult to access. The staff person will explain the problem and suggest a means to resolve it. You will be asked to sign to confirm that the boxes were or were not picked up. Any missing boxes or other problems will be noted on the pick-up confirmation sheet.

## Records Located Outside the Puget Sound Area

Transportation of records located outside the designated Records Center pick-up route and the cost of shipment, are the responsibility of the agency. Some agencies use couriers or common carriers to deliver their records, others use UPS or Central Stores, or deliver their records to Olympia themselves. Call the Records Center for suggestions (*see directory page 2*).

# RETRIEVING RECORDS STORED AT THE RECORDS CENTER

All records held at the Records Center are considered confidential and are available only to the agency of origin. Retrieval of records can only be completed by individuals authorized by the Agency as a Records Center “User.” Any request for your agency's records from another source, is directed to the Records Officer or Public Disclosure Officer for the agency. The Records Center runs each reference request through a series of security and accuracy checks before records can be retrieved. These checks include:

- ▶ verification that the requestor is an authorized Records center “user”
- ▶ do you work for the agency that the records belong to (*if you work for another agency, you will be referred to that agency of origin’s Records Officer*)
- ▶ is the information for box number you gave is actually stored at the Records Center (*database verification process*)
- ▶ is the box or file you have requested currently checked out to someone else (*you will be notified of the name of the person who has the records*) or are their other issues of non-receipt or the file has reached its retention and was authorized by the agency for disposition.

This section discusses the steps necessary for an agency to retrieve records stored at the State Records Center. Please take the time to understand:

- ▶ How to be an authorized Records Center “User”
- ▶ Retrieve records using a reference request
- ▶ The information necessary to complete a reference request
- ▶ Making a reference request for specific files contained within a box
- ▶ Reference request failure notices
- ▶ Allowable rate for reference request
- ▶ Returning the records requested back to the Records Center

## How to be a Authorized Records Center “User”

1. Approval from your agency appointed Records Officer.
2. Establish a “user” pass with the Records Center by filling out **Password/User ID Request** (see appendix C). Note: Select two possible passwords. The second password choice used only if the first one you select is already in use. The password remains active until you or your Records Officer asks us to delete or change it.

Use the Password/User ID Request to update the Records Center about any changes: if you move, change your mail stop or telephone number, retire, or transfer to another agency. If you let someone else use your password, records can be check out under your name without question. **You remain responsible for those records until they are returned to Records Center storage.**

You can request different passwords, which allow you to receive your records in different manners. For example, one password would show your mailing address, another would tell Records Center staff to hold your files and call you. You can have one password for your entire office or passwords for everyone in the office.

3. Have your Records Officer sign the request (required to process)
4. Fax it to the Records Center to process

## Retrieve Records Using a Reference Request

After you have been established as a Records Center user, you can begin to retrieve files by obtaining a **Reference Request** form from your Records Officer or Records Center. All reference records request must come to the Records Center in writing on the Reference Request form. An electronic version of the form may be used after Records Center approval of the format.

If you do not receive the requested records, you will receive a “failure notice” indicating why the records are not available (someone else may have them or they are not stored at the Records Center). If you feel the *failure notice* from the Records Center is inaccurate, contact the Records Center immediately.

## The Information Necessary to Complete a Reference Request

Contact you agency Records Officer to obtain a copy of your records transmittal with an attached box content lists to locate the file and its appropriate barcode number. If the records transmittal lists are lost, box content list are inaccurate, or were never completed, we strongly recommend that all boxes in the group be pulled, and agency staff create a new inventory and box content list for future reference.

## Reference Request for Specific Files Contained within a Box

Records Center staff will pull the entire box or a specific file from a box per your request and prepare the request for delivery. If there are several parts or volumes that you specifically ask to be pulled from a box, the number of volumes will be noted on the front of the file folder (ensure you return the same number of volumes as requested – see returning

multiple files page 24). If there is no file folder, the documents will be placed in a folder, which is stamped "Return the documents in the folder."

All specific file requests pulled from a box are assigned an *exclusive reference number in barcode format* electronically. When you receive the specific requested files, there will be a barcode sticker on the file giving the file title. A corresponding barcode label is placed on an "out-card" that is placed in the box where the file was pulled. It is vital that you **do not remove, write on, or cover this exclusive assigned reference number**. If you put your records in a new file folder, include the exclusive label or photocopy the barcode number onto the new folder. Without this exclusive reference number, the file cannot be returned to the box from which it was taken and will be returned to you for further information. When you request a whole box, a bar-coded mailing label is added to the box. This label has no value when shipping the box back to the Records Center.

Some files and boxes you receive will have a red "Historical" sticker on them. These records are listed as archival on the records retention schedule and will eventually be transferred to permanent storage with the Archives. Take special care with these records and return them to the Records Center as soon as possible.

## Reference Request Failure Notices

When you want to request a specific file be pulled from a box and the Records Center found that the file you want is not in the box, you will be notified. You will be told if there is an agency out-card (*someone took the file before it was stored at the Records Center*); if the file is simply not there, or if it appears you identified the wrong box. *If you receive a failure notice and you want us to verify our work, send a second reference request.* In these cases, we recommend that you request the entire box to try to locate the file yourself. Always notify the Records Center Manager if you find that a mistake has been made.

If you receive the *wrong file*, note this on the reference barcode label, return the file, and **send another reference request**. Note on the second request that the wrong file was pulled the first time.

## Frequency of Reference Request

The records stored at the Records Center should be relatively inactive. If staff find that a series of records require exceptionally high rates of reference over an extended period, you may be contacted to decide if it would be better to keep the records in-office. Call the Records Center if you question the appropriateness of sending a record series.

# Returning the Records Requested Back to the Records Center

## Boxes

Returned boxes are identified at the Records Center by the barcode on the end of the box. If you need to put the records in a new box, write the barcode number on the end of the box or cut the label from the old box and tape it to the new box. The bar-coded mailing label used to send the box to you is unimportant and must be covered with our mailing address on a self-adhesive label (otherwise CMS may return the box back to you). Make sure the box is taped shut before mailing. Records Center staff picks-up boxes to be returned to storage at the same time of a new box pick-up. Put the boxes and a list of their box numbers near the new boxes for pick-up. You can also drop them by the Records Center in person.

## Individual files pulled from a box

Wrap returned files securely and attach all loose documents before mailing. Identify each bar-coded file by putting a rubber band around it or each group of files pulled with one barcode number. If you put the records in a new folder, transfer the label or a copy of the label to the new folder. Make sure the label is not hidden by documents added to the file. It is critically important that the reference barcode label remain on the files. If you need to combine two files pulled with two barcode labels, call the Records Center for directions.

When you finish with the records retrieved, return them to the Records Center by Consolidated Mail, US Mail, or in person. Our database list them checked out to you until they are returned.

## Multiple folders/volumes pulled from a box

If a file request has multiple volumes or folders, the number is noted on the file folder. Return all volumes or folders at one time or write a note on the folder explaining why fewer are being returned.

# INTER-FILING (*ADDING FILES TO BOXES ALREADY IN STORAGE*)

The Records Center will do a *limited* amount of inter-filing for customers - adding files to boxes already in storage. Please work to complete any outstanding filing before boxes are initially transferred to the Records Center. Attach information to each file listing the box number, your name, and your phone number. The Records Center has a form you can use for this information. Due to the limited number of staff, the Records Center can only do a minimal amount of inter-filing for you. Inter-filing is a *low priority task* at the Records Center and *will be done as time allows*. Allow up to one month for the file to reach the box.

For individual document inter-filing, complete a reference request for the appropriate files or boxes. You can do this interfiling at your office or at the Records Center. This gives you complete control over the placement of the files or documents.

Sometimes, once you have added documents to a file, the file will no longer fit in the box. You can transfer that file to the Records Center with the next shipment of boxes. Adjust existing transmittals and file lists to reflect the removal of the file from its current box.

Consider very carefully the impact on the cut-off date when adding documents to a box. For example, if you add 1997 correspondence to a file that closed in 1994, you just changed the cut-off date of the box. The Records Center will not know the box needs to be kept longer and it will be destroyed prematurely. Do not add new files to already stored documents that extend the cut-off date.

## DISPOSITION OF RECORDS

Disposition is described by any means of changing the custody, action includes transfer to the records center, transfer of permanent records to the Archives, and disposal of records that have met their retention. The final action that puts into effect the results of an appraisal and approval of the State Records Committee documented on an agency records retention schedule.

This section discusses the process of the Records Center and the necessary cooperation by the agency to meet timely disposition of records that have reached the end of their retention period. Disposition allows maximum use of available storage space, reduces the liability to the agency of origin created by retaining records past their retention period, and eliminates the costs of storing and referencing records that are not needed. Disposition can occur in one of three ways - destruction (usually by recycling or shredding), legal transfer to the Archives, or permanent return to the agency of origin. In all cases, the records permanently leave Records Center custody.

### Disposition Lists

As previously discussed, records stored at the Records Center are only in our physical custody while the agency retains legal custody. When records stored at the Records Center are up for destruction (the retention is completed), the Records Center sends a memorandum of notification together with a **disposition list** to request written permission from the agency Records Officer before disposition will take place. This process is done periodically by agency and/or selected offices of an agency that are eligible for disposition. This disposition list briefly describes all the records up for destruction.

The agency Records Officer is required to respond in writing to this notification with two options: 1) Give their signature approval to disposition the records; or 2) indicate the reason why the records should be held for disposition such as:

- Pending discovery (lawsuits)
- Ongoing audits
- Retention is found to not be adequate and the series will need to be revised (contact your Agency Records Officer to learn how to modify the retention schedule)
- Disposition Authority Number was incorrectly used



## ● Retention was not met

Clearly explain the reason for the postponement/hold and indicate how long the disposition should be postponed. Records cannot be placed on indefinite hold. Any records held will appear on your next disposition list and the hold will need to be renewed or approved for disposition at that time. The agency will continue to be charged for storage of any records that are held past their disposition date.

Agencies need to be conscientious and timely about responding to their disposition list/notifications. If the Records Center does not get a response after two requests, the records can be destroyed without further notice by signature authority of the State Records Committee already contained on the Records Retention Schedule.

## Disposition of Archival Records

Records designated as “archival” on either type of records retention schedule are determined by the State Archivist to have historical or continuing value. They must be transferred to the Archives section at the end of their retention period. Both legal and physical custody of the records are transferred to Archives at this point and they become a part of the collection documenting the history of state government. You will no longer be charged for their storage by the Records Center. The records become available to agency staff and public researchers under the supervision of the Archives Research Section and in accordance with appropriate public disclosure regulations. Once a record has been transferred to the Archives section you will need to make arrangements for your reference of that record through the Research Archivist.

*CAUTION: Not all records designated as “archival” on the retention schedules are going to be retained by the Archives. The archivists may elect to keep only a sample or portion of the records transferred. In some cases, actual review of the records may show that the records do not have archival value, after all, and they will be destroyed. The Archives section will notify the agency if a record is no longer Archival. If you need to have a specific records series retained, do not rely on the Archival designation to ensure permanent availability of the information. The records retention period must meet the legal, administrative, and audit needs of your agency.*

## Permanent Return of Records to the Agency

The agency Records Officer can make a written request for the return of records sent to the Records Center that are actually needed immediately at-hand in the agency. The Records Center will arrange for return of the records and permanently delete information about them from the database. Once deleted, the boxes cannot be returned to the Records Center without submitting new transmittals and applying new barcode labels. If you need records for a long-term project, but will eventually return them, just check them out using the regular reference request process. There is no time limit on how long you can keep a box requested.

## Disposal Notice

As previously discussed, records stored at the Records Center without historical or continuing value will be destroyed at the end of their retention period following agency review and approval of the disposition list. Once the records are approved for disposition, a

final disposal notice is sent to the Records Officer to: 1) confirm the date of destruction (for recycling<sup>2</sup>), 2) transfer custody to the State Archives, or 3) return to the office of origin for special handling (e.g. confidential records that require shredding).

We strongly recommend that the disposal list be used to update your records by attaching a destruction notice to your Records Center transmittal copy. This will eliminate people requesting records from the Records Center because the existing transmittals did not indicate the records disposition status.

## In-Office Disposal Recommendations

Some types of records are never stored at the Records Center. If the records are listed on approved, current retention schedules, the office of record can destroy them at the end of their retention period. *It is illegal to destroy records prematurely or to destroy records not listed on an approved records retention schedule.*

The agency Records Officer is responsible for setting the policy and procedures within their agency for in-house records destruction. They are also responsible for supervising and documenting in-office destruction to prevent the inappropriate or premature destruction of records. It is recommended to keep a log of the records destroyed. The individual agency is responsible for arranging and paying for the cost of records destruction. Agency staff should check with their Records Officer before destroying any records. *Do not destroy records scheduled as "Archival" on a records retention schedule.* Contact your agency's Records Office and the Archives section staff if you have archival records to transfer or if you have records you believe might have historical value. The archivists will explain the transfer procedure. You have a role and responsibility in preserving the history of our State.

## Disposition Summary

- Records disposition is controlled by the records retention schedules
- Records disposition by the Records Center includes one of three actions: destruction, transfer to the Archives section, or return to the agency
- The Records Center always notifies an agency, and requests agency approval, before disposition takes place, but will act if no response is received
- The Records Officer can request a delay in disposition when necessary
- The Records Center sends the Records Officer a list confirming that the disposition of records has taken place
- The Archives section takes legal custody of transferred records and makes them available for public research. The Archives may destroy records after careful consideration and consultation with the agency of origin, if they are not deemed archival
- The Records Center will permanently return records to an agency upon request
- It is illegal to destroy records not listed on approved retention schedules or to destroy scheduled records prematurely
- The Records Center will not accept records from agencies needing disposal without 6 months of Records Center retention remaining in the total retention

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<sup>2</sup> **Recycling** - Usually a vendor under contract with the State recycles the records. The vendor has committed to protect the records from disclosure. If you have any concerns about this process, please contact the Records Center Manager. The cost of recycling is included in the annual box storage charge. The Records Center will not accept records from agencies needing disposal without 6 months of Records Center retention remaining.

- The Records Officer is responsible for proper disposal of records held within the agency

## RECORDS CENTER STORAGE CHARGES

A fee is charged for each box stored at the Records Center. The Records Center fee covers all regular Records Center services, including the cost of storage of the box, reference services, supplies, shipping, and disposal. The amount of the fee is set each biennium and is based on the costs of operation of the Records Center divided by the number of boxes in storage. Fees may be required for large projects that are beyond the scope of daily workloads.

An individual agency's next biennium Records Center costs are based on the number of boxes it has in storage at the end of the previous biennium. This charge remains constant until a new box count is done.

An agency is not charged for boxes that have reached the end of their retention, but have not been disposed of due to Records Center work backlogs. Agencies are charged for boxes that are checked out for reference but not returned and for boxes held at agency request past their disposition date.

*Do not assume that the entire "Archives" billing your agency receives consists of Records Center charges.* In addition to the Records Center fee, your agency is charged a separate fee to support the other operations of the Division of Archives & Records Management including administration, records management, and archival services. All agencies pay this second fee, whether or not they have boxes in the Archives or Records Center.

If you have questions about these fees, contact the Records Center Manager, State Archivist, or the Office of the Secretary of State, Financial Services Division.

## RECORDS CENTER REPORTS

Any information in the Records Center database about your records is available to you as a report. Reports may include lists of boxes in storage or checked out sorted by either DAN or office number; list of authorized users, and list of files checked out. Call the Records Center to explain the information you need and they will probably be able to generate it in a report format.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Accession Number** - A number assigned by the Archives to identify shipments of records to the Archives.

**Accession** - The transferring of physical and legal custody of documentary materials to an archival repository.

**Active Records:** Records regularly used for the conduct of the current business of their creator, and therefore, continue to be maintained in office spaces (also called current or working records).

**Administrative Records** - Records that document the operation and internal administration of an office; usually distinguished from program records that relate to the office's primary functions.

**Alphanumeric Filing System** - a classification system where letters are assigned to main divisions and numbers to subdivisions. For example, "PER 5" might stand for "Personnel-Employment."

**Appraisal** - The process of evaluating the value of records and determining which records to retain or discard by comparing to the Records Retention Schedule.

**Archival Records** - Archival records are those that have enduring value and are preserved for reference and research purposes because they reflect significant events or document the history and development of the state government.

**Archives** - the repository for records that the Archivist of the Washington State has determined to have sufficient historical or other value to warrant their continued preservation by the State Government.

**Archivist** - A person responsible for the appraisal, preservation, and reference service of archival materials.

**Barcode Number** an electronically generated number assigned by the Records Center to identify shipments of records sent and stored at the Records Center.

**Classification** - the grouping of records in a standard pattern and indexing the records with the appropriate file designation and cross-reference. This term does not include security classification of documents.

**Copy** - (1) a reproduction of the contents of an original document prepared simultaneously or separately and usually identified by function or by method of creation. Copies identified by function include information or reference copy, official file copy, reading or chronological file copy, and suspense or tickler copy. Copies identified by method of creation include copier copy, and electrostatic copy. (2) in electronic recordkeeping, the action or result of reading from a source, leaving the source data unchanged, and writing the same data elsewhere on a medium that may differ from the source.

**Cross-Reference** - filing a duplicate of a document or a cross reference form when the same document is needed in two separate subject or case file folders.

**Cut-off** - An event or date when the records become inactive or when the retention period begins. This may be an event such as the termination of a contract, or a date such as the beginning of a new fiscal, academic, or calendar year.

**Disposal** - The process of destroying obsolete records. By law, public records cannot be destroyed without approval of the State Records Committee.

**Disposal List/Notice** – list or notice of records up for destruction after a specified retention period approved by State Records Committee has been met.

**Disposition** – Any means of changing the custody, action includes transfer to the records center, transfer of permanent records to the Archives, and disposal of records that have met their retention. The final action that puts into effect the results of an appraisal and approval of the State Records Committee.

**Disposition Authority Number (DAN)** - Each records series reviewed by the State Records Committee is assigned a disposition authority number (DAN) to indicate that the disposition of the documents in the series has been approved by the committee for disposition as documented on the signed records retention schedule.

**Essential (or Vital) Records** - Records essential to resume or continue operations of the university; those necessary to recreate the university's legal and financial position; and/or to fulfill obligations to the university, its employees, students, and outside interests.

**File** - (1) an accumulation of records or non-record materials arranged according to a file system plan. (2) a unit, such as a folder, microfilm, or electronic medium, containing such records and non-record material. (3) storage equipment, such as a filing cabinet. (4) in electronic recordkeeping, an organized collection of related data, usually arranged into logical records that are stored together and treated as a unit.

**Filing System** - A set of policies and procedures for organizing and identifying files or documents to speed their retrieval, use, and disposition. Sometimes called a recordkeeping system.

**Function/ Purpose** - The description of the function of the records series; i.e., how the records are used in the office and for what purpose.

**General Correspondence Files** - records arranged and filed according to their general informational, or subject, content. Mainly letters and memorandums, but also forms, reports, and other material, all relating to program and administrative functions, not to specific cases. Also called central, correspondence, or subject files.

**General Records Retention Schedule** - A retention schedule issued by the State Records Committee governing the disposition of records series that are common to many offices in an agency (as compared to a unique/specific records retention schedule which governs the disposition of records series to specific to an agency unique program).

**Inactive Records** - Records no longer needed by their creator to conduct current business (also called non-current records).

**Information Copy** - a non-record copy sent to individuals or offices interested in, but not acting on, a matter.

**Inventory** - A survey of records conducted prior to the development of a records retention schedule. It lists each records series giving such data as title, inclusive dates, quantity, arrangement, relationships to other series, and description of significant subject content.

**Life Cycle of Records** - The management concept that records pass through three stages: creation, maintenance and use, and disposition.

**Medium (Media)** - The physical form of recorded information. Includes paper, film, disk, magnetic tape, and other materials on which information can be recorded.

**Microform** - A generic term for any media or form containing micro-images.

**Non-Archival Records** - Records of limited administrative value that is maintained in an office and/or in the Records Center for a specified period before destruction (also called temporary records).

**Non-Record or Records with No-Retention Value** - Material that does not need to be filed and that can be destroyed after it has served its purpose. This includes drafts; worksheets, routine replies, and extra copies of documents created for convenience see State General Schedule GS50.

**Office of Record** - The office responsible for maintaining the most complete set of particular records series.

**OFM (Office Files and Memoranda)** OFM are copies of "OPRs" and all other documentation. They include records made for the internal administration of an office, but not required by law to be kept or filed.

**OPR (Official Public Record)** OPRs are the "official" or "primary" copies of records that a) are identified and required by statute, b) document legal actions or transactions, or c) fiscally or financially obligate the University as a whole. OPR records have a minimum retention period of six years.

**Permanent Records** - records appraised by State Archives as having sufficient historical or other value to warrant continued preservation by the State Government beyond the time they are needed for administrative, legal, or fiscal purposes.

**Program Records** - records that relate to the unique, substantive functions assigned to the office is responsible, in contrast to administrative records, such as State-aid project files or motor carrier accident case files. May include both subject and case files.

**Proprietary Records** - Records containing information of a confidential or highly sensitive nature, requiring destruction by shredding to eliminate the possibility of illegal or undesirable disclosure.

**Public Records** - Public records shall include any correspondence, photograph, film, sound recording, map drawing, or other documents, regardless of physical form or characteristics and including all copies thereof that have been made by or received by any agency of the State of Washington in connection with the transaction of public business. (RCW 40.14)

**Records Center** - A low cost storage facility or centralized location that is used for organized storage of inactive records retained for administrative or operating purposes, usually for a limited period.

**Records Coordinator** – Assigned by the Records Officer/Manager to be responsible for the maintenance, records inventorying, records transfer, and records destruction within the office of an agency.

**Records Management** - the planning, controlling, directing, organizing, training, promoting, and other managerial activities related to the creation, maintenance and use, and disposition of records to achieve adequate and proper documentation of State and Federal policies and transactions and effective and economical management of agency operations.

**Records Officer/Manager** The individual appointed by the agency director to be responsible for an office's records management program, procedures, including files organization and maintenance, records inventorying, records transfer, and records destruction.

**Records Retention Schedule** - Instructions governing retention and disposition of current and non-current recurring records series of an organization or agency. Schedule are created by internal agency department that indicates each record series length of time it is to be maintained in office (active), or when to be transferred to the records center (inactive/retirement), and provides instructions if series is microfilmed, or special destruction instructions for *proprietary records* or if the records should be transferred to archives.

**Records Series** A group of documents that perform a specific function in an office. They may be filed as a unit, used as a unit, and transferred and disposed of as a unit. A records series may consist of copies of a single form or may be comprised of various types of documents.

**Records Transmittal** – The document used to prepare lists of records transferred for storage at the Records Center. It is submitted by the agency appointed records officer/manager prior to transferring records to the storage facility.

**Retention Period** - The length of time the records series must be retained before it is eligible for destruction or archival preservation. The retention period begins when the series has met the *cut-off*, (e.g. date: calendar year for correspondence, or fiscal year for most financial records, or with a specific action or event that makes the files inactive such as termination of employment for some personnel records).

**Retirement** – when a record meets its inactive life cycle and is transferred to the State Records Center.

**Scheduled Records** - records approved by the State Records Committee on a records retention schedule.

**Series** - file units or documents arranged according to a filing system or kept together because they relate to a particular subject or function, result from the same activity, document a specific kind of transaction, take a particular physical form, or have some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use, such as restrictions on access and use. Also called a records series.

**State Records Center** - a facility, operated by Division of Archives and Records Management, for the low-cost storage and servicing of State records pending disposal or transfer to the State Archives.

**State Records Committee** The committee consists of representatives of the Offices of Attorney General, Financial Management, State Auditor, and the State Archivist. The committee is authorized by *RCW 40.14* to oversee a statewide records management program and to approve records retention schedules for all state agencies and higher education institutions.

**Survey:** The process of identifying record series created and/or maintained by an office and the extent of the nature of their use.

**Transfer** - The act or process of moving records from one location to another, especially from office space to agency storage facilities or records center, from one State agency to another, or from office or storage space to the State Archives for permanent preservation.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## 1. Who can use the Records Center?

*The State Records Center stores semi-active and inactive records for Washington State agencies and Universities and Community and Technical Colleges. The records must be listed on an approved records retention schedule.*

## 2. How quickly can I get a file?

*The files or boxes you request by 3:00 P.M. will be pulled the next working day and sent to you by Consolidated Mail, UPS, or US Mail depending on your location. In cases of exceptional workload or staff shortages, records reference can take two working days. Urgent requests received by 3:00 P.M. are always pulled the next day by 10:00 A.M. You can call the Records Center to find out when your request was processed.*

*In cases of extreme emergency, records can be retrieved the same day. The Records Officer must verify that the state or an individual will suffer exceptional harm or damage if the records are not available that day. Call the Manager or Supervisor to request a "Same Day Request." The number of Same Day Requests is limited to keep staff, and consequently, box storage costs as low as possible.*

## 3. How do I transfer my boxes to the Records Center?

- *Select the records to store. The records must be included on an approved records retention schedule or General Schedule and have reached their cut-off date or event, but not their disposition date*
- *Gather the necessary supplies including boxes, box labels, and transmittal forms (use supply order request form if supplies are needed)*
- *Place the records in order in Records Center boxes. Contact the Records Center about storage of odd sized records*
- *Prepare records transmittal forms describing the boxes*
- *Prepare any lists of the contents of the boxes that you will need in your office to retrieve the records. Include a list with the transmittal if the records series are "archival" (required.) A form is available to use to list the contents of "archival" boxes*
- *Label the boxes, put the matching barcode label on the appropriate transmittal*
- *Have the Records Officer review, approve, and sign the transmittals. Keep a photocopy in case the originals are lost while being processed*
- *The Records Officer will send the transmittals to the Records Center for review and entry. The Records Center will enter the information into the Records Center database and return the pink and yellow copies of the form. Problems with any information will be noted*
- *The Records Center will call to arrange for pick-up of the boxes or they can be shipped or delivered once the pink or yellow copy is received at the office*

## 4. What is the difference between the State Records Center and Archives?

*They are at separate locations and have two entirely different purposes. The Records Center provides low cost off-site storage to state agencies - the agency maintains legal custody. If a record has met the agency retention, and is designated "Archival," the agency transfers legal custody of the record to the State Archives for historical preservation and public research.*



**5. How are we charged for Records Center services?**

The charges are based on the number of boxes your agency has in storage. It is set once every biennium and billed to your agency quarterly and calculated by taking the total Records Center operating cost and dividing it by the total number of boxes in storage, which equals out to a per box storage cost. We then take total box count for each agency and times it by the per box storage cost, this equals to the box storage cost per year. We then times that by two years, which equals to the total box storage cost per biennium.

**(Total Records Center operating budget / total boxes in storage = box charge \* agency box count = box charge per year \* 2 yr = agency biennium box fee)**

*The box fee covers all Record Center services, storage, and supplies. Note: When your agency receives a final billing it includes not only the Records Center fees but also the fees charged to support the Archives & Records Management Division. Those are calculated based on your agency's FTEs.*

**6. Is our office notified before records are destroyed?**

*Yes, always! Disposal notices for records stored at the Records Center and past their destruction period are sent to the Agency Records Officer to obtain a signature from the originating department authorizing the destruction of records. This is required before the Records Center disposing of any records. This process can be delayed if necessary for documenting legal, audit or program need.*

**7. Where do I get boxes for storage at the Records Center?**

*Boxes, box labels, and transmittal forms can be obtained by using the Records Center supply order request form (see Appendix C) The supplies are available at no extra cost to agencies storing at the Records Center.*

**8. Can I retrieve specific files from the Records Center?**

- *The Records Center will retrieve any file or box needed by the agency*
- *Access is limited to the agency that owns the records. Other agencies, and the public, cannot access the records*
- *Agency staff must have approval of their Records Officer to retrieve records*
- *The Records Center requires customers to select and use passwords to make retrieval more efficient and secure*
- *Customers request records by faxing a Reference Request form to the Records Center listing the boxes and/or files needed*
- *Records are typically pulled the next day*
- *Customers are notified if a box or file is not available*
- *Records can either be picked up, mailed, or reviewed at the Records Center*
- *The Records Center re-files records upon their return*
- *There is no additional charge for retrieval services*

**9. Does the Records Center have tours and training?**

*Tours of the Records Center are available upon request. Any customer, or potential customer, is encouraged to come and see how their records are stored and accessed. We encourage a tour of our facility.*

*Formal classroom training on Records Center procedures is provided through the Department of Personnel/Education & Training Program. The Department of Personnel charges a minimal fee for this class. The classes are listed in the monthly training bulletin issued by the*

*Department of Personnel. Contact your agency training officer to register for the Department of Personnel class. Informal training tailored to specific situations and needs, is available on request. Pending staff availability, the Records Center does conduct on-site training at no charge. However, it must be coordinated by the agency Records Officer and the Records Center Manager.*

**10. What records can I store at the Records Center?**

*Inactive records can be retired to the Records Center as indicated on an agency approved records retention schedule (see page 6 of this manual).*

**11. Is Records Center storage safe?**

*Yes. The storage facility is protected from fire and other environmental hazards. Access to all storage areas is limited to Records Center personnel with appropriate clearances. Records stored in the Records Center will not be disclosed to anyone without authorization from the Agency Records Officer. Criminal penalties for the unlawful removal, damage, or destruction of records are set forth in statute.*

**12. Are records ever lost by the Records Center?**

*The Records Center has a computerized space and location tracking system that tracks each box stored in its custody. Despite the millions of boxes stored, there is minimal risk that a box will be lost.*

**13. Can I get records back if I need them?**

*Yes. You can retrieve either boxes or folders, or you can review materials at the Records Center to view. Retrieval time is 72 hours, but retrieval in 24 hours is possible if you arrange for pick up. In emergencies, records can be retrieved in as little as 4 hours.*

**14. Will records be destroyed without my consent?**

*NEVER. The Records Center does not destroy any records up for destruction without notifying the Agency in writing well in advance of the proposed destruction date. Once the Agency has been notified, you will be given an opportunity to justify extending the retention of the records if you feel that is warranted. For more on this process, see "Disposition of Records," on page 23.*


**15. Once the records are retired to the Records Center, who controls access?**

*Records stored at the Records Center cannot be accessed without the consent of the appointed agency Records Officer and/or those individuals he/she authorized to access records.*

**16. Once records are transferred to the Records Center, who legally "owns" them?**

*Your agency does. Although the records are in the physical custody of the Records Center, the agency retains legal custody until either the time they are legally destroyed or transferred to the State Archives.*

# REFERENCE REQUEST - *Appendix A*

	<b>RECORDS CENTER REFERENCE REQUEST</b>
Division of Archives and Records Management	<i>Instructions: Return this request to: State Records Center MS: 40239 or FAX: (360) 586-9137 Email: <a href="mailto:recordcenter@secstate.wa.gov">recordcenter@secstate.wa.gov</a></i>

1. Requester Password	2. Requester Name	3. Requester Phone Number	4. Date
5. Agency Name		6. Agency OFM Number	7. Mail stop
8. Office Name			9. Office number

*List each requested file or box separately.*

Enter below either the Box Barcode Number or Accession Number/Box Number (Location not needed)	*24-hr Pickup? ✓=Yes	Whole Box? ✓=Yes	If requesting a specific file to pull from a box, indicate below: file name/topic or number sequence (leave blank if checked yes to whole box)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Instructions for Completing the Reference Request

- 1) Enter your password, name, telephone number, and date.
- 2) Enter the appropriate barcode number. Transmittals created from January 1993 to the present contain barcode number. For boxes sent to the Records Center prior to January 1993, enter the accession and box number. For example, "91-3-426/864" for accession 91-3-426, box 864. The accession number is typically hand written in the upper right-hand corner of the pre-barcode transmittal. Call the Records Center if you have difficulty locating the necessary numbers.
- 3) Check "24-hour Pickup?" if this is a rush (urgent or "hot") request. All rush requests received by 3:00 p.m. are pulled by 10:00 a.m. the following workday. Since you need these records quickly, you will be called to come pick up the when they are ready. We will also call you if there is any problem locating the records. You must pick up your records within two days after notification, unless other arrangements were made. Records not picked up within this time limit will be re-filed. Please make urgent requests only when necessary.
- 4) Check "Whole Box?" if you are requesting the entire box. Leave the information about the file or files you want blank.
- 5) If you only want a file, enter the accurate information that identifies the file such as the name and/or file number.
- 6) Fax or e-mail the form to the Records Center at (360) 586-9137 or [recordscenter@secstate.wa.gov](mailto:recordscenter@secstate.wa.gov).

# PASSWORD USER/ID REQUEST -Appendix B

 <i>Washington</i> <b>Secretary of State</b> SAM REED	<b>State Records Center</b> 7590 New Market St, PO Box 40239 Olympia WA 98504-0239
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## Password/User ID Request

You need a Password/User ID to store records at, or to retrieve records from, the State Records Center. Use this form to establish a password, update your current password information (i.e. change a phone number), or cancel your password. Complete the form, send it to your Agency Record's Officer for approval, and forward approved form to the Records Center for data entry. The password is used to prevent unauthorized access to records, to produce mailing labels, and to track reference activity.

☐ Change ☐ Delete ☐ New

Please Print or Type

CURRENT PASSWORD/ID	NEW PASSWORD/ID	NEW PASSWORD/ID (second choice)
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**NOTE:** The Password/User ID can be any combination of alphanumeric characters up to 10.

NAME	AGENCY OFM #	OFFICE NUMBER (Item 2 on Retention Schedule)
AGENCY NAME	DIVISION	
SECTION	OFFICE/UNIT	
MAILING ADDRESS AND/OR MAILSTOP		
PHONE NUMBER	FAX NUMBER	EMAIL
AGENCY'S RECORDS OFFICER'S APPROVAL SIGNATURE		

FAX to Records Center at (360) 586-9137 or send to Mail stop 40239.

# SUPPLY REQUEST FORM - *Appendix C*

RECORDS CENTER USE  
ONLY

- ☐ CMS  
☐ UPS  
☐ WALK-IN  
☐ DELIVER



*Washington*  
**Secretary of State**  
SAM REED

## STATE RECORDS CENTER SUPPLY REQUEST

*Instructions: Complete and fax to the Records Center at (360) 586-9137 or send to mail stop 40239. Please limit your request to a six-month supply for your office.*

NAME	
Agency Name	Office Name/Number
MAILSTOP/ MAILING ADDRESS	
E-MAIL ADDRESS	TELEPHONE (INCLUDE AREA CODE)

Quantity Ordered	Records Center Supply List
	BARCODE LABELS
	BOX CONTENT LABELS
	TRANSMITTAL FORMS – 50 per package, but we can send a smaller number, if needed
	REFERENCE REQUEST FORM – Individual sheets. Feel free to copy.
	BOXES – Packaged in bundles of 10. We can mail up to 20 boxes if you cannot come to the Records Center to pick them up. Boxes are for records storage at the Records Center only! Contact Central Stores for boxes for other uses. We can deliver large quantities of boxes during a new box pick-up.
	RECORDS CENTER MANUAL
	ARCHIVAL BOX CONTENT LIST - Use the form to list the files in boxes that are designated as "Archival" on your Records Retention Schedule.

# RECORDS CENTER BOX TRANSMITTAL - *Appendix D*

Washington State Records Center Box Transmittal

Will you be delivering/mailling the boxes to the Records Center ☐ Yes ☐ No

AGENCY NO.	OFFICE NO.	AGENCY AND OFFICE NAME		DATE PREPARED	PAGE NO.	RECORDS CENTER USE ONLY	
OFFICE LOCATION (STREET ADDRESS, FLOOR, AND ROOM NUMBER)							
PREPARER'S NAME, TELEPHONE, AND MAILSTOP				RECORDS OFFICER INITIAL AND MAILSTOP			
ENTER A MAXIMUM OF THREE DANs PER BOX. THE RECORDS IN A SINGLE BOX MUST BE DUE FOR DISPOSAL AT THE SAME TIME.							
PLACE BARCODE LABEL HERE		DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NO.	SERIES TITLE (MUST MATCH WORDING ON RETENTION SCHEDULE)		CUTOFF DATE	INCLUSIVE DA	
ENTER RECORDS CENTER BOX BARCODE NUMBER HERE	AGENCY BOX NO.	IF THE BOX CONTAINS A SINGLE SERIES SHOW DETAIL OF CONTENTS			RECORDS CENTER COMMENTS		
PLACE BARCODE LABEL HERE		DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NO.	SERIES TITLE (MUST MATCH WORDING ON RETENTION SCHEDULE)		CUTOFF DATE	INCLUSIVE DA	
ENTER RECORDS CENTER BOX BARCODE NUMBER HERE	AGENCY BOX NO.	IF THE BOX CONTAINS A SINGLE SERIES SHOW DETAIL OF CONTENTS			RECORDS CENTER COMMENTS		
PLACE BARCODE LABEL HERE		DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NO.	SERIES TITLE (MUST MATCH WORDING ON RETENTION SCHEDULE)		CUTOFF DATE	INCLUSIVE DA	
ENTER RECORDS CENTER BOX BARCODE NUMBER HERE	AGENCY BOX NO.	IF THE BOX CONTAINS A SINGLE SERIES SHOW DETAIL OF CONTENTS			RECORDS CENTER COMMENTS		
PLACE BARCODE LABEL HERE		DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NO.	SERIES TITLE (MUST MATCH WORDING ON RETENTION SCHEDULE)		CUTOFF DATE	INCLUSIVE DA	
ENTER RECORDS CENTER BOX BARCODE NUMBER HERE	AGENCY BOX NO.	IF THE BOX CONTAINS A SINGLE SERIES SHOW DETAIL OF CONTENTS			RECORDS CENTER COMMENTS		
PLACE BARCODE LABEL HERE		DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NO.	SERIES TITLE (MUST MATCH WORDING ON RETENTION SCHEDULE)		CUTOFF DATE	INCLUSIVE DA	
ENTER RECORDS CENTER BOX BARCODE NUMBER HERE	AGENCY BOX NO.	IF THE BOX CONTAINS A SINGLE SERIES SHOW DETAIL OF CONTENTS			RECORDS CENTER COMMENTS		
PLACE BARCODE LABEL HERE		DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NO.	SERIES TITLE (MUST MATCH WORDING ON RETENTION SCHEDULE)		CUTOFF DATE	INCLUSIVE DA	
ENTER RECORDS CENTER BOX BARCODE NUMBER HERE	AGENCY BOX NO.	IF THE BOX CONTAINS A SINGLE SERIES SHOW DETAIL OF CONTENTS			RECORDS CENTER COMMENTS		

FORM SSA-1d (REV 9/97)

Example – Obtain user forms from the State Records Center



## How to complete the Records Center box transmittal

1. Enter how the boxes will be sent to the State Records Center choosing one option.
2. Enter your agency's Office of Financial Management (OFM) number -- a three-digit number.
3. Enter your agency's name (e.g. *Secretary of State* or *OSOS*)
4. Enter office number (if unknown ask your agency Records Officer)/enter the name of your office (e.g. 110/Human Resources).
5. Enter the date this form is sent to the State Records Center for processing.
6. Enter number of transmittals being submitted (e.g. Page 1 of 1 or Page 1 of 4)
7. Enter the address, floor number and room number of where the boxes are located. This is especially important if the Records Center is picking up.
8. Enter the name/telephone number and mail stop of the individual who is preparing this transmittal(s).
9. This entry is required. The agency Records Officer must initial to verify that the transmittal has been thoroughly reviewed and that all the information contained is correct. The mail stop is necessary so after the Records Center processes the transmittal the pink and yellow copies will be returned to the Records Officer.
10. Contact your agency Records Officer or the State Records Center to obtain pre-printed barcode labels. There are two labels one for the form and one for the box. Place the small (1/2" X 4") barcode sticker in the area marked "Place Barcode Label Here." Make sure that the label matches the label on the box you are describing on the form. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACCURACY OF YOUR WORK IN LABELING AND DESCRIBING YOUR RECORDS.**
11. Enter the assigned Disposition Authority Number (DAN). This is a control numbers assigned to records retention schedules and general records retention schedules approved by the State Records Committee. From the records retention schedule enter the DAN for the series being stored in the box. **There is enough space to use three different DAN numbers per box having the same or similar disposal dates.** When using more than one DAN, the Records Center calculates the boxes disposal based on the DAN with the greatest retention, using the same or similar retention times is important. However, we strongly recommend no more than three different DANs per box. Use of the correct DAN is critical.
12. Enter the assigned title for the series. Again, this can be found on the records retention schedule.
13. Inclusive dates: Enter month/year of the earliest to the latest dated document in the box (e.g. 08/89-10/99).
14. The **cut-off** is defined as "**when the retention begins or is activated**." Enter the cut-off in month and year (e.g. *The retention schedule says the cut-off for the series is "Fiscal Year," the documents cut-off is calculated on the 2001 fiscal year Sept through August, so you would enter on the transmittal 08/01*).
15. Type/print the number from the barcode label (Required entry). The barcode stick-on label does not go through all copies of the transmittal. This ensures that you will be able to retrieve your records from your copy of the transmittal.
16. **OPTIONAL:** for agency tracking purposes only. Enter any agency box number you have assigned for your own internal use – Not used by the State Records Center
17. **OPTIONAL:** for agency tracking purposes only. Enter for agency first and last file number or name of records in the box.

### UPON COMPLETION OF THE TRANSMITTAL AS INSTRUCTED ABOVE:

- Keep the transmittal parts together, create a security copy of the transmittal for your records and reference
- Attach a box content list - *records designated "Archival" (see records retention schedule) require a box content list*
- Attach a copy of the box content list to your transmittal security copy
- Mail all three parts of the transmittal (white, yellow, and pink copies) to the Records Center *or three copies if electronic version*
- When you receive the pink or yellow copy back from the Records Center approved with a control number assigned in the upper right hand corner in box used for **Records Center Use Only**.
- Based on what you have checked ☒ Records Center Pick-up or ☒ Agency will deliver - someone at the Records Center will be contacting you to schedule either a pick-up or a delivery date. If you checked ☒ Consolidated Mail, you can send to **State Records Center MS: 40239**

(NOTE: If the transmittal contains any items lined through – these boxes will NOT be accepted. DO NOT SEND THESE BOXES TO THE RECORDS CENTER.